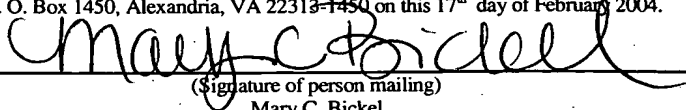


I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to: Hon. Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February 2004.

By



(Signature of person mailing)

Mary C. Bickel

(Typed or printed name of person)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF: J.C. Colberg, et al.

APPLICATION NO.: To Be Assigned

: Examiner: To Be Assigned

FILING DATE: Herewith

: Group Art Unit: To Be Assigned

TITLE: Process And Ester Derivatives Useful For  
Preparation Of Cephalosporins

Hon. Commissioner for Patents  
P. O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Please amend the present application as follows:

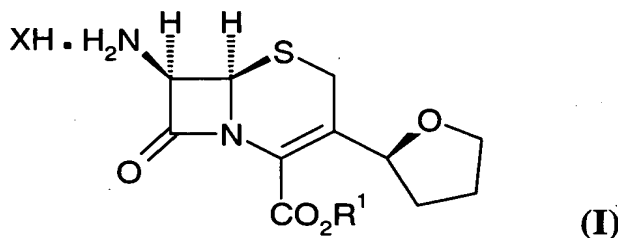
IN THE SPECIFICATION

Before the first paragraph on page 1 and after the title of the present application, please insert the following:

The present application claims the priority of U.S. Patent Application No. 10/006,579, filed on December 4, 2001, which in turn claims the priority benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/251,018, filed on December 4, 2000. The contents of these priority documents are herein incorporated by reference.

MARKED-UP COPY OF THE CLAIMS

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A process for preparing a compound of formula (I):



wherein R<sup>1</sup> is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl; X is halo;  
comprising the steps of: